

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. In a digital television receiving system, a method of sharing information comprising the steps of:

- 5 a) a first device receiving a digital television bit-stream;
- b) a second device setting a value in an attribute field of a command, said command for requesting information regarding said bit-stream;
- c) said second device setting at least one flag of a plurality of flags in said command, said step of setting defining the type of information said attribute field
- 10 describes;
- d) said second device issuing said command to said first device; and
- e) said first device responsive to said value of said flag of said request, returning one table of a plurality of tables to said second device.

- 15 2. The method of Claim 1 wherein said plurality of tables comprise a master guide table, a terrestrial virtual channel table, a cable virtual channel table, a system time table, a rating region table, an event information table, and an extended text table.

- 20 3. The method of Claim 1 wherein said command is a direct select data command.

4. The method of Claim 1 wherein said type of information in step c) comprises event information.

5. The method of Claim 1 wherein said type of information in step c) comprises navigational information.
- 5 6. The method of Claim 1 wherein said first device is a tuner device.
7. The method of Claim 1 wherein said second device is a controller device.
8. The method in Claim 1 wherein said digital television bit-stream comprises  
10 multiplexed digitized video, digitized audio, data, and said plurality of tables.
9. The method of Claim 8 wherein said digitized video is in MPEG format.
10. The method of Claim 1 wherein said devices are coupled together via an  
15 IEEE 1394 serial bus architecture.
11. A digital television receiving system comprising:  
a first device having a memory unit for storing a command, wherein said  
command has a plurality of flags and a plurality of attribute fields, wherein at  
20 least one of said attribute fields is operable to store information of different  
types, and wherein said plurality of flags are configurable to identify the type of  
information held in said plurality of attribute fields;  
a second device connected to a digital television bit-stream;  
a communication link connecting said first device and said second  
25 device;

said first device operable to issue said command to said second device;  
and

said second device operable to return one table of a plurality of tables  
from said digital video bit-stream to said first device.

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12. The digital television receiving system of Claim 11 wherein the value in a  
first of said plurality of attribute fields is selectable between a system time table, a  
rating region table, and an extended text table, according to settings of said  
plurality of flags.

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13. The digital television receiving system of Claim 11 wherein said first  
device is a controller device.

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14. The digital television receiving system of Claim 11 wherein said second  
device is a tuner device.

15. The method in Claim 11 wherein said digital television bit-stream comprises  
multiplexed digitized video, digitized audio, data, and said plurality of tables.

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16. The method of Claim 15 wherein said digitized video is in MPEG format.

17. In a digital television receiving system comprising devices coupled together  
via a serial bus architecture, a method of requesting information comprising the  
steps of:

a) a first device issuing a request for information regarding the content of a digital television bit-stream, said request comprising a command having a plurality of flags which specify the type of information requested and a plurality of attribute fields configurable to hold information of different types, wherein the type of information in the attribute field is specified by said plurality of flags.

b) a second device connected to said first device receiving said request for information;

c) based on said plurality of flags, said second device determining one table of a plurality of tables which the value in the valid attribute signifies; and

d) said second device transferring said requested information about the content of said bit-stream to said first device.

18. The method of Claim 17 wherein said plurality of tables comprise a master guide table, a terrestrial virtual channel table, a cable virtual channel table, a system time table, a rating region table, an event information table, and an extended text table.

19. The method of Claim 17 wherein said first device is a controller device.

20. The method of Claim 17 wherein said second device is a tuner device.

21. The method in Claim 17 wherein said digital television bit-stream comprises multiplexed digitized video, digitized audio, data, and said plurality of tables.

22. The method of Claim 21 wherein said digitized video is formatted according to MPEG.

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